

EMERGENCY RESPONSE
-Code 3-
-Standard Operating Procedures-

Emergency Response

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Emergency Response

Code 3

Unit I

1) Response Codes

- Code 2 (Urgent call)
-Proceed immediately **without** siren and red lights.
- Code 3 (Emergency call)
-Proceed immediately **with** siren and red lights.

2) Authorized Emergency Warning Devices

- 1 – Solid burning red light facing forward.
- 1 – Rotating red light or light bar with red on both ends.
- 1 – Flashing red light facing the rear.
- 1- Flashing amber light facing the rear.

3) Use of Emergency Warning Devices

Fire equipment and personnel often are moved within a Field Office as well as from one region or county to another during emergencies.

- On emergency responses within the Field Office, red lights and siren will be used as appropriate or as required by law.
- When responding to emergencies outside the Field Office, red lights and siren will be used as appropriate or when Code 3 response is requested by the emergency command center.
- When responding to emergencies wherein the response is for support of another county or region and not for initial attack, the red light and siren will not be used while en route unless there are specific instructions to do so.
- Headlights will be on during all emergency response conditions.

4) Exemption of Authorized Emergency Vehicles

The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle is exempt from certain laws relating to speed limits, rights of way, and signs or signals when responding to a fire alarm or other emergencies, but not when returning from such an emergency. This is true providing the red lights are turned on and the siren is sounded sufficiently to warn other drivers and pedestrians.

Emergency Response (Cont.)

5) Effect of Exemption

The law requires that the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle, which is responding to an emergency, use good judgment. It does not relieve the driver from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway, nor does it protect the driver from the consequences of an arbitrary and careless exercise of exemption privileges. An employee, however, is not liable for civil damages arising out of proper operations in the line of duty of an authorized emergency vehicle when responding to an emergency call.

6) Emergency Response Vehicle Guidelines

The following guidelines are established in accordance with the California Vehicle Code:

- The fact that a vehicle is an “Authorized Emergency Vehicle” does not relieve the driver from the duty of compliance with the rules of the road.
- Before a pedestrian or motorist can yield the right-of-way, the opportunity to do so must be afforded.
- In traversing an intersection (Code 3), the speed of the emergency vehicles must not be greater than that enabling the vehicle to stop without collision should the right-of-way be violated. At times, it may be necessary to come to a complete stop at an intersection and then proceed cautiously after determining that the intersection is clear.
- Do not pull up immediately behind a vehicle and sound the siren suddenly. The vehicle may stop right in front of you.
- Do not pass on the right unless no other course is open, and pass then only at a safe speed and after you are positive that the car you are passing will not drive to the right as you go by.
- Do not sound the siren at its highest pitch continuously. Fluctuate it throughout the tonal range.
- Keep near the center of the roadway so oncoming vehicles can see the red lights approaching.
- Do not follow another emergency vehicle too closely. A motorist may yield to the first emergency vehicle and then pull out in front of the following vehicle.

Emergency Response (Cont.)

6) Emergency Response Vehicle Guidelines (cont.)

- The best route of travel for an emergency response often entails driving on a freeway. The use of red lights and siren on a freeway is not required or recommended, providing the vehicle is not exceeding the posted speed limit or disregarding other traffic regulations. The unnecessary use of siren and red lights on a freeway may cause confusion on the part of other vehicles, which may impede the safe flow of traffic.
- The use of the air horn should be kept to a minimum. Excessive use of the air horn may drown out the siren. During a Code 3 response, the air horn normally should be used only when approaching intersections, and then two or three short blasts should suffice.

Reference:

*Department of Motor Vehicles
2003 Vehicle Code
Sacramento, CA*

Emergency Response

Standard Operating Procedures

Unit II

PURPOSE: To initiate a SOP process to increase *personnel safety* on all emergency responses.

1) Preparedness

- All SCBA, fire tools, and medical equipment shall be on and in place.
- All module leaders and engine operators will become familiar with your response area.
- All personnel will be trained in roadway emergency response prior to being allowed to respond on any fire apparatus. (Engine Academy, Local District or Field Office, etc.)

2) Arrival On Scene

- Size up of the incident.
 - What has happened?
 - What is happening?
 - What will or could happen?
- Risk Management Process
 - Decision Point, Go No Go.
- Placement of fire apparatus to provide crew safety from oncoming traffic and turn off all nonessential lights. Note: The California Highway Patrol has determined that impaired drivers tend to steer their vehicles towards flashing lights.
- No personnel are to exit the fire apparatus until instructed to by the module leader.
- No personnel are to exit the fire apparatus without full personal protective equipment.
- All personnel will exit the fire apparatus on the non-traffic side.
- Post a lookout to watch for oncoming traffic.

Standard Operating Procedures (Cont.)

3) On Scene Operations

- Firefighter and public safety will always be the primary concern.
- All operations should be conducted as far from traffic lanes as possible, if necessary request that traffic lanes be shut down by the jurisdictional law enforcement agency.
- If equipment needs to be removed from the traffic side of the apparatus one person, with a lookout to watch for oncoming traffic, shall do this.
- Keep all hose, fire tools, and equipment out of traffic lanes.
- Engine operators will operate pumps from the non-traffic side or from the cab of the apparatus.
- No personnel shall remove their personal protective equipment until they are back in the fire apparatus.
- All emergency responses on roadways will be concluded as quickly as possible to reduce personnel exposure.